



Water risk as world warms

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Abstract:

First comprehensive global-impact project shows that water scarcity is a major worry. When pondering the best way to study the impact of climate change, researcher Hans Joachim Schellnhuber liked to recall an old Hindu fable. Six men, all blind but thirsty for knowledge, examine an elephant. One fumbles the pachyderm's sturdy side, while others grasp at its tusk, trunk, knee, ear or tail. In the end, all are completely misled as to the nature of the beast. The analogy worked. Although many researchers had modelled various aspects of the global-warming elephant, there had been no comprehensive assessment of what warming will really mean for human societies and vital natural resources. But that changed last year when Schellnhuber, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany, and other leading climate-impact researchers launched the Inter-Sectoral Impact Model Intercomparison Project. This aims to produce a set of harmonized global-impact reports based on the same set of climate data, which will for the first time allow models to be directly compared. Last month it published its initial results in four reports in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. These suggest that even modest climate change might drastically affect the living conditions of billions of people, whether through water scarcity, crop shortages or extremes of weather.

Source: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/505010a>

Resource Description

Exposure : ☒

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Food/Water Security, Human Conflict/Displacement

Geographic Feature: ☒

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location: ☒

resource focuses on specific location

Global or Unspecified

Health Impact: ☒

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Health Outcome Unspecified

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern:

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Low Socioeconomic Status

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Policy/Opinion

Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content